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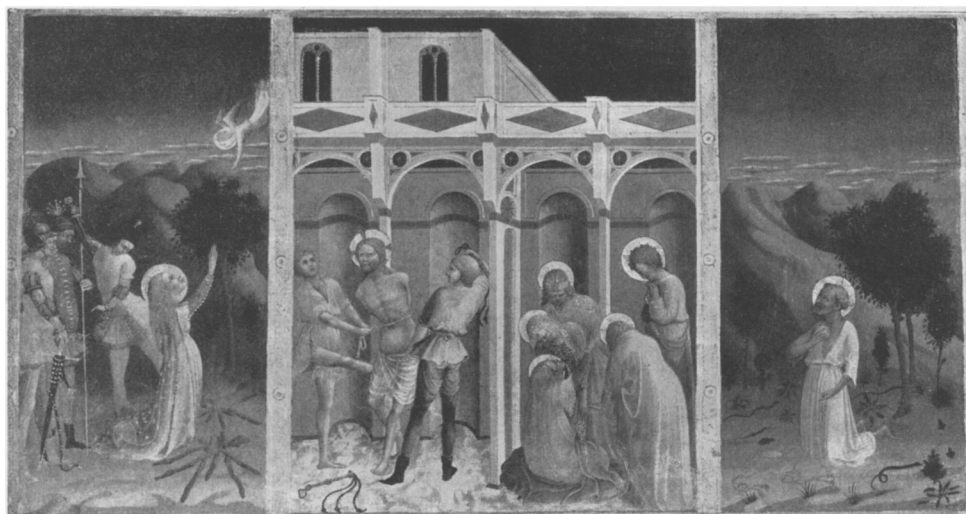
Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin

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Scenes from the Lives of Christ and Various Saints

*Slegano di Giovanni
(called Sassetta), 1392-1450*

Gift of Mrs. Henry H. Sherman in memory of her father, Samuel Parkman Oliver

The Henry H. and Zoe Oliver Sherman Collection

IT is true of this Museum, as of most American art museums, that in general people go first to the painting galleries, that they find there what most interests them, and that many visit other galleries hastily, if at all. In a word, to most visitors the art museum means primarily its galleries of paintings.

It is the recognition of this fact which has inspired the splendid gift from Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Sherman of the collection which bears their names. For years they have been acquiring works of art, chiefly paintings, with the intention of ultimately enriching the permanent public exhibitions in and near Boston. After generous gifts to the Worcester Art Museum and the Fogg Museum of Art, they have given to this Museum the larger part of the collection. The pictures include, besides a number of canvases by Italian masters of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, paintings of the Flemish, Dutch and Spanish schools, and examples of living American artists distinguished among their contemporaries. Two terra-cotta heads, Italian, of the fifteenth century, complete the collection. Three miniatures have also been given by Mrs. Sherman and her sisters.



Descent from the Cross *Cosimo Rosselli, 1439-1507*

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Sherman

It is peculiarly true in this instance that the gift expresses the personal interest and taste of the givers. Under these circumstances it is natural that they should retain the collection for the present, while at the same time they now turn over its ownership to this Museum in order to secure their ultimate purpose of providing objects for the public to enjoy.

Two of the paintings have been kindly loaned to the Museum for a time by Mr. and Mrs. Sherman, and are reproduced in the accompanying illustrations. They are characteristic examples of masters whose work has hitherto not been represented at the Museum.

The Fourth R

LIKE two of the familiar three, the fourth R is not an R at all, but quite another letter, namely D. The four Rs are Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Drawing.

Our educational system is already expected to give every pupil a fair ability to read and write, as well as to cipher. Why should it not be expected to give every pupil a fair ability to draw and paint? Our grammar school graduates are now able to set down their impressions of things in words; why should they not also be able to record the actual forms and colors that have impressed them? Why should free-hand drawing be deferred to the high school and be made optional even there?

The reason is that, while we no longer believe, with Dogberry in "Much Ado about Nothing," that reading and writing come by nature, we do believe that drawing and painting come by nature and without a natural gift cannot be practised successfully. Hence we are willing to teach reading and writing to every one, while at the same time we treat drawing and painting beyond the rudiments as more or less an exceptional subject for exceptional pupils.

Is the Dogberry attitude regarding drawing and painting justified? If not, we are doing the mass of our growing citizenship great wrong in not giving them, with the ability to read and write, some ability also to draw and paint. If every normal person can be given a satisfactory skill in recording by line and color the looks of things about him, we ought to regard a high percentage of *impicturacy* as a discredit to a community like a high percentage of illiteracy. Further, the exceptional ability of those who now use line and color imaginatively will never receive among us the response it should unless the ability to draw and paint real things has endowed us all with that interest in the visible world on which the imaginative artist must build. Both to sharpen our powers of observation and to enhance our powers of enjoyment, every one of us should be fairly skilled in using the pencil and the brush.

Mr. Anson K. Cross, Instructor in the School of this Museum, has just published a book entitled

"Drawing and Painting Self-Taught," in which he claims that the prevailing Dogberry attitude regarding drawing and painting is wrong. The capacity to draw and paint is as general as the ability to write and to sing, and the persons without it are as exceptional as the inveterate bad spellers in a class or those few of its number who "cannot tell one note from another." This point Mr. Cross argues in the course of describing a method which he has devised of enabling people to teach themselves to draw and paint with the aid of special glasses and lenses. Reproductions of the work of numbers of his pupils accompany the text of his book.

The appearance of a book challenging a traditional assumption—like the belief that drawing and painting are only for the exceptionally endowed—is in itself an event of importance, whether the challenge is valid or not. In the present case the challenge seeks to prove its validity by assigning proper limits to the assumption. Only the gifted can make pictures out of what they see. This is designing. All the normal can make copies of what they see. This is drawing. But as drawing is necessary in designing, the two have been usually taught together and the whole study has come to be thought more or less exceptional and advanced. This criticism of the traditional assumption is convincing and demands to be carefully weighed. If the Dogberry attitude about drawing and painting is wrong, if drawing and painting as a record of observation can be generally taught, the position of these studies in the public school system stands in need of material development; and out of this development may come a future population who will have learned really to see what they are looking at and who will demand that what they have to look at every day in their clothing, their utensils, their newspapers, their books, their furniture, their buildings, their streets, their parks, their gardens, their roadsides, and their countrysides shall not offend but please the attentive eye. Such a development of the visual sense among the general public is the necessary condition of a healthy growth of imaginative art.

"Drawing and Painting Self-Taught" is sold at the Huntington Avenue entrance and may also be obtained by addressing the Secretary of the Museum. Price, \$3.15 postpaid. G.

Story-hours for Children

AT 2.30 P. M. on Saturday afternoons during November Miss Margaret L. Wheeler, Assistant in Instruction, will hold a story-hour for children in Classroom A. The subjects of the stories will chiefly be taken from Persian and Japanese tales. The children will be given the opportunity of making simple sketches in the classroom and in the galleries in illustration of the subjects chosen.